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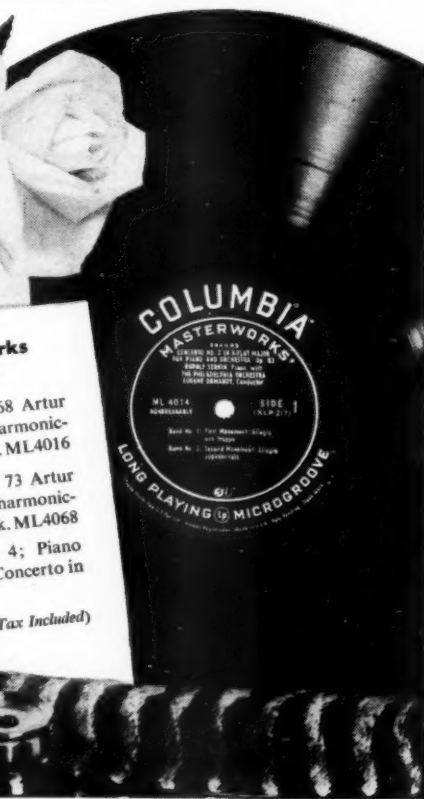
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ISSUES OLD AND NEW

Editorial Notes

By now Victor's new 45 r.p.m. disc has been heard by many readers. Officially, it was placed on sale on April 1st, though some New York stores were demonstrating it several days earlier. This latest development in the record field has created a great deal of comment pro and con. Apparently, the several different types of records, now on the market, prove confusing to many record buyers. That this condition is not a new one, few would seem to be aware. It existed at many points in the life of music on records in the past. Consider the problems of the record buyer of former years when cylinders, hill-and-dale and lateral-cut discs were on the market. Though differences in speed at that time were less radical, nonetheless they also existed. To be sure, these affected far less people, as very few, in those days, were interested in reproducing more than one type of recording, which was by and large the lateral-cut, 78 r.p.m. records sponsored by the big business concerns — Victor and Columbia.

In a machine age, one can hardly expect any product to remain static. The science of reproducing sound could not fail to march ahead with other scientific developments. Changes and improvements in the sound-reproducing field have been steadily manifest since the war. It would have been paradoxical had one basis of sound production — the record — not have advanced along with recent developments in equipment. None of these to date have made obsolete the products with which most of us have grown up. The existent commercial reproducing equipment still have a limited frequency range. Even the latest machines in the price range of the average consumer, made by RCA Victor, do not reproduce the full range of the new 45, though it can be truthfully said

that the latter offer a better semblance of realism from these discs than from the standard 78. That new developments in the record field have been accomplished in radically different ways, than those to which we have become accustomed, would seem to have been the result of extensive experiments rather than a sudden arbitrary move as some would like to believe.

RCA Victor states that operating speeds employed in the past were selected without consideration of undistorted reproduction. Though one suspects this statement will be challenged by men in the engineering world, it is not for us to contradict it. It refers, of course, to the distortion in the inner grooves of the standard 78 record, which is eliminated in the new 45. There are many reasons for that distortion as well as ways and means to counteract them. The alignment of the pickup has never been pursued to the point of near-perfection. The limitations of space in cabinets have largely prevented this. RCA Victor, further points out, that several years after the Victor Talking Machine Company perfected the lateral-cut record and the spring-wound phonograph motor, turntable speeds in the industry varied from 70 to 90 revolutions per minute. The latter statement bears out our contentions regarding the earlier record buyers. As to the perfection of the lateral-cut disc, authorities differ on this. H. Courtney Bryson, in his book *The Gramophone Record*, contends that the perfection of the lateral-cut disc was accomplished by American Graphophone Company sometime during the first decade of the century. He refers to the so-called laminated record, and states: "Most technical experts are agreed that the 'paper surface' disc constitutes the finest type that has ever been manufactured in commercial quantities. It was probably on this disc that the reputation was acquired by English records for representing the highest peak of technical achievement." Unquestionably Victor and others contributed their own improvements to their products, yet the complete tribute and recognition for the first efforts to perfect this record goes to Emile Berliner, who created and developed it. When we delve into the history of the record and the phonograph contradictions consistently confront us, and no one company can claim full honors.

Relative to the adoption of 78 r.p.m. by record manufacturers, Mr. Bryson states: "This speed, which agrees with theoretical considerations, was chosen *empirically* [italics ours] long ago as a sort of compromise among various factors, chief of which were the ratio of surface noise to music, the time of playing of a selection and the maintaining of an even speed of rotation of the record during reproduction."

We have previously pointed out that acquiring near-perfect rotation of an inexpensive motor governed higher speed considerations. The slower speed, i.e. 33 1/3 r.p.m., is said to have been arrived at as an expedient for early sound motion pictures, in connection with 16-inch transcription discs, as it gave the right playing-time relationship of one disc to one reel of film. Joe Maxfield of Bell Laboratories arrived at this speed by his mathematical connotations made for Vitaphone in the middle 'twenties. However, slow speeds, possibly as low as 33 1/3, would seem to have been experimented with in record laboratories prior to this. In the early thirties, Victor adopted this speed for its long-playing records.

RCA Victor tells us that during the ten-year research and development program which resulted in its new 45 r.p.m. record and reproducer, engineers conducted extensive tests to determine at which speed distortion-free reproduction could be obtained from a record at minimum size and cost, playing as long as a conventional 12-inch record. "By establishing a relationship among several factors," the company's engineers tell us, "including minimum diameter at different speeds for the innermost and smallest turn of the spiral, beyond which distortion would occur, the size of the reproducing stylus to be used, and the desired length of playing time, it was possible to determine at what speed the company's goal could be fully realized. A turntable speed of 45 r.p.m. emerged as the mathematical answer. At this speed engineers could guarantee 5 1/3 minutes of distortion-free performance, and the finest quality record in RCA Victor's history." RCA Victor's engineers further point out that the inherent advantage of the 45 r.p.m. speed over the 33 1/3 speed is the fact that the former has a higher groove speed under the reproducing needle,

(Continued on page 232)



BACH ARIA GROUP — Seated l. to r. Jean Carleton (soprano), Wm. H. Scheide (Dir.), Margaret Tobias (alto), Robert Bloom (oboe). Standing l. to r. Bernard Greenhouse (cello), Sergius Kagen (piano), Norman Farrow (bass-bar.), Maurice Wilk (violin), Julius Baker (flute), Robert Harman (tenor).

BACH AND VOCAL CHAMBER MUSIC

By William H. Scheide

(Director of "Bach Aria Group")

I remember a conversation I once had with a friend, a music lover and record collector, on the subject of his particular interest, chamber music. He gave every appearance of being well-informed in this field but when I asked: "Have you ever heard of vocal chamber music?" he answered: "No." Such a reply should not be considered a serious reflection on his lack of knowledge for such works of the 19th and 20th centuries as exist of this type are not of sufficient numbers or importance to form a real musical category. They still smack of the esoteric. And these last two centuries are still the only ones inhabited by most music lovers. That is, if we include the Mozart period. For in the works of the great Wolfgang there is already the spirit that has produced our musical world of solo virtuosi; conductors, pianists, violinists and singers. These still constitute almost the only means of bringing musical experience to the general

public. What is not written for great orchestras or solo virtuosi is largely not performed.

That this is a really deplorable and preposterous situation is seen as soon as one looks at other arts. Public appreciation of architecture or sculpture goes back without difficulty two or three thousand years. In painting, the medieval and renaissance Italians have not yielded to the moderns and in literature no dimming of the popularity of Shakespeare can be detected. The devotees of these arts have before them a vast variety of artistic experience; innumerable attitudes of mind deeply alien to our own into which they can enter and from which they can learn. How excessively small in comparison is the less than two centuries of music history which enjoys any real popularity. No wonder music is invariably neglected in general histories and by "students of culture." For most of

the music we hear today was a living force only for the nineteenth century. It would, indeed, be a living force anywhere, anytime for a while. But after the millionth hearing it begins to wear a little thin. Especially after the world which produced it has been shattered in the two most frightful wars of history. Let us see if we can break out of this musty 19th-century music studio.

It is not so easy as one might wish to think. It is not only the performers that have chained us, it is the music itself. We have become largely tone deaf. Unless we hear the harmonies, sonorities and melodies to which we are accustomed there will be no musical experience. A musical sensitivity must be developed which will have to be built on organically to our present musical endowment. Thus there is needed a music which will act as a sort of bridge which, while satisfying modern musical preconceptions, will lead past them into a new musical world into which we can grow and expand indefinitely.

As might be expected, I feel that these conditions are met in the music of Bach. Bach occupies the pivotal position of using on the one hand modern melodies and harmonies as well as voices and instruments with modern counterparts while at the same time absorbing and perfecting almost his entire musical past. If there ever was a multi-faceted genius it is he. What is desirable, therefore, is to enter into his world at its point of greatest contact with ours with a view not only to enrich ourselves on his unrivalled spirit but eventually to work backwards from him to the vast but more distant musical heritage still lying unclaimed.

Where then is this point where Bach's work makes its greatest contact with our musical world? The assumption I find most tenable is that it is in his cantatas for voices and instruments, especially in the arias, the commonest musical form in the cantatas. Here Bach holds counterpoint to a minimum, memorable tunes are everywhere and sonorities of every type occur. But there is no condescension in this music. The conception often ranks on a par with the greatest and most abstruse instrumental works. However, to this power of inspiration Bach adds in his arias the appeal of clarity. And in discussing the arias and cantatas we are not concerning ourselves merely with some inci-

dental creation of Bach but precisely with that music which is his central achievement, his main work. For, as Albert Schweitzer says in his Bach book: "In comparison with the cantatas, everything else that Bach has done appears as hardly more than a supplement." It is easy therefore to see what a revolution this demands in the popular conception of Bach.

As a first step in bringing this about it is necessary to break through the convention of solo virtuosi, to create a group capable of performing the vocal chamber music ensembles in which Bach revelled. Here is the handicap and the inertia against which one struggles. It is also the reason Bach's arias are so little heard. There is surely a larger place for the shifting colors of intimate ensembles. There is surely a larger place also, I hope, for Bach...

These are some (though not all) of the objectives now being pursued by the Bach Aria Group. Here is an organization devoting all its activities to the performance of Bach's vocal solo music in order to create as large a public for it as possible. Because of its makeup it possesses a larger potential Bach repertoire than any other musical soloist or ensemble. This, in the case of so eminent a composer as Bach, is surprising enough. But there are plenty of other points of interest. There is little superficial resemblance between the Bach of arias and the composer of the organ fugues and many of the chorale preludes. When a musical layman meets the arias for the first time he is often surprised that Bach could have written them. The more educated music-lover finds delight in the wealth of vocal chamber music they offer. So the Bach Aria Group finds itself doing something remarkably new and yet at the same time of the highest greatness. The success of the Group and the interest already shown by the public in its work make us believe that the need for this music, which we suspected, actually exists. This is indeed a happy discovery and impels us to go forward and extend our world. Our main goal is and will always be recordings as through them the listener can achieve the most lasting enjoyment of the music. Though I believe that these arias make an initially beautiful impression, it is only by repeated hearings that one comes to know really such a spirit as Bach.



Stravinsky
Studio Lipnitzki

STRAVINSKY'S "SYMPHONY OF THE PSALMS" ✓

By Sydney Grew

When Stravinsky's first recording of his *Symphony of the Psalms* was issued in 1931 in England, the late Sydney Grew — editor of *The British Musician* and *Musical News* — was so stimulated by it that he wrote the analysis printed below. At the time no score was available yet, Grew after spending a couple of days with the records, formed his own conclusions. Curiously, these are neither affirmed nor denied by Stravinsky in his autobiography (1935). The composer merely states the bare facts that led to the creation of the work, although his vague remarks lead one to believe that Grew was on the right track. At the time, Grew wrote us in part as follows: "I know nothing of Stravinsky's politics or religion, except that, according to published data, this must be his first rendering in art of a scriptural theme. There are no official or analytical expositions, yet the choice of text allows me to assume the intentions of the composer. I have never had more than a moderate amount of sympathy for other works of Stravinsky which I happen to know well. And though I have nothing but the recording of the *Symphony* (by the *Straram Orchestra*, etc.) yet I can tell, after a dozen or so hours of contact with the music, that it is sincerely religious, and it must therefore have been inspired by some vast event or circum-

stance of which its creator is spiritually a part. I regard it as a great and noble work. Strangely, a recording of Palestrina's famous *Impropria* served the *Symphony* a good turn, so far as my personal study of the latter was concerned, for the older work lifted me in the highest mood of which my nature is capable. Once in that mood I was in the state to feel the religious character of the new music, to overcome the awkwardness of its strange idiom, and to withstand the shock of the 'foreign' nature of the composer's conception of the theme. I was helped to see that the two works — the remote Palestrina and the overwhelmingly near Stravinsky — are fed by one and the same inner impulse." — Ed.

I

The text of the first movement is the last two verses of Psalm 39 (King James version of the Bible). The main consideration of the psalm as a whole is the brevity of life. Our days are as hand-breadths; we ourselves are as shadows, or "breathings". We do well therefore to live quietly. The key to the spirit of the two verses that are used by Stravinsky lies in the expressed words *stranger and sojourner*, and in the understood thought of *Faith*. The thought of the forty years wandering in the wilderness is in the

substance of the text, and in the music is an expression of what that wandering signifies. Whether we take this work as an ordinary "drama" of religious emotion or as a particular expression of contemporary emotion, this interpretation serves; and it instantaneously justifies everything in the music.

The form of this opening movement, the Prelude, is the true *preghiera* of musical forms. Even with the breaks, it appeals to the listener as one continued imploration. The words are set simply and directly. The time-quality allowed the syllables is very cleverly calculated to enable the words to assert their meaning. The verbal phrases are disposed on a large, broad measure. The ending is quick and immediate.

The music is simple, and it will attract and hold listeners who may find it hard to understand the music of the Fugue. The harmonies of the fourth phrase, "*quoniam advena ego*", have an almost mediaeval simplicity. There is a break after "*lacrymas meas*", and the following "*Ne sileas*" is uttered in a sharp, forceful, intense manner. The forcefulness beginning with this latter phrase develops into extreme power in the phrase "*sicut omnes patras mei*", and the following "*Remitte mihi*" seems to cut through the climax. The emotional peak of the prayer comes inevitably with the concluding phrase, where the choral tone is exceedingly powerful. The cadence in one very familiar in all choral music of religious tone, both ancient and modern.

II

The text of the Fugue is verses 1-3 of Psalm 40. These fall into two portions. The setting of the first portion is prefaced by an instrumental exposition of the theme. That of the second is preluded by the same, though in different form. In respect of tonal refinement, these two instrumental passages are well-nigh unique: they express, I should imagine, the "patiently" of the text; the "*expectans expectavi Dominum*" which renders the original Hebrew of "In waiting, I waited for the Lord".

In his interpretation of the first portion of the text it seems that Stravinsky wants us to realize that the speaker still feels himself very near to the distressful conditions implied in the words. Vivid in the psalmist's recollection are the horrible pit and miry clay:

the "place of noise and tumult" and the ground "where there is no standing". Stravinsky does not write pictorially. His style is not even the dramatic. But he certainly does write in a manner that lets us perceive the poet, and the people for whom the poet speaks, still tremulous with the strain of the recent ordeal. In this is the key to his music. So we must remove from our minds any recollection of such a conception of the text as that expressed in Mendelssohn's "I waited for the Lord: he inclined unto me, he heard my complaint. . . ."

The Fugue has the same fine declamation as the Prelude. Its cadential accumulation of power (in other words, its larger rhythm) is equally masterly. The music has touches of loveliness, both intellectual and tonal, that thrill one. But there are difficulties. Although the polyphony is simple, the vocal line is not always clear, because once in a while certain instruments project themselves into the foreground. Moreover, the harmonies are occasionally disturbing. Yet when one has realized Stravinsky's conception of the ideas, everything becomes comparatively natural to the musical sense.

One of the touches of true loveliness comes at the cadence "*luto faecis*". And the music for the last phrase of the following, "*et direxit gressus meos*", is a very echo from some pure medieval time—the basses enter, and the other voices, curiously blended, inclined towards them.

The underlying thought in the text of the second portion of the Fugue is "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust". We know this very well in our anthems. Yet here again, as always when coming to a composer like Stravinsky, we must at first put aside all our previous conceptions of the right musical treatment of scriptural themes. Later on, of course, we have to find the bond between works as diverse even as a traditional anthem and this latest expression of religious ideas. The bond discovered, we have all art within our grasp. The music here is a little easier, in style and mood, and though it has no sweetness, it is ecstatic. Indeed, it is lofty; and from the full-throated commencement of the "*Et immisit*" right on to the close, it has something of Miltonic sublimity.

A profound change of tone is effected for the next idea; and the level music of the con-

cluding phrase establishes a mood of quiet.

III

In his setting of the Psalm 150 (third movement) Stravinsky must have been influenced by two considerations. One — that this psalm, being connected with Nos. 149 and 148, has a spiritual significance which, not apparent on the surface, is revealed by its companions.

The other consideration — that his work is a *symphony*, in the modern poetical sense of the term. It is therefore to be "accordant" or "harmonious" throughout, as the Scriptures—shall we say?—are harmonious in the matter of prophecy and fulfilment.

This second consideration, which gives character to Psalm 150 from its dramatic association here with Psalms 39 and 40, makes Stravinsky write music for it that has here and there a more sober tone. The first consideration makes him at the same time write music of a "processional" nature; for these three last psalms are of Congregational type and they belong therefore to services of the Festival order.

The psalm, celebrating joy in the overcoming of national enemies, is a recognition that God "maketh glad the poor with victory". The people "purified seven times in the fire of affliction" (as the psalm-text of the earlier movements of the symphony show), have gained an abiding spiritual faith. Hence, in their song of praise and thanksgiving they make the declaration that, out of faith, they are assured of confidence and courage to withstand the difficulties of the future. This movement is best described as consisting of four main sections.

1.

The people sing the *Alleluia*, in harmonies that reflect the pure diatonic of Western religious music. Then the priests sing the sentence, *Laudate Dominum*, in notes that suggest the eternal East. There are two phrases to be mixed in the mind. They are a kind of "motto" or "motive". Returning several times, they serve as binding material in the movement as a whole. The *Laudate* is part of the first verse, at the close of which the "motto" of *Laudate Dominum* is repeated.

The instrumentalists begin their work. They play a prelude, of which the material is:

- (a) simple reiterated chords

- (b) a basso ostinato of 6 quarter notes
- (c) and a trumpet figure of 4 staccato notes.

The music in time becomes bright with

- (d) a movement in triplets under which is a heavy bass.

The instrumental prelude ceasing, the women sing "*Laudate Eum in virtutibus Ejus*". The musical phrases are of the 4 half-notes extent, being very compact. The words are mostly firmly carved. The spirit is that of a joyous elevation! In the body of the instrumental accompaniment is a set of four chords (of quarter note length) that is constantly repeated.

An interlude ensues. The music takes the chords (a) of the instrumental prelude. To their rhythm, but all on one note, the altos and tenors sing "*Laudate Dominum in virtutibus Ejus*, *Laudate Dominum in santis Ejus*". The effect is mysterious, with the mystery of remote ages.

The delivery of the psalm is continued, with "*Laudate Eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis Ejus*, *Laudate Eum in sono tubae*". The basses lead with the first line. Altos and tenors set themselves in due course over the basses, their text also the first line. Then the sopranos enter, to sing with the basses the second line. The instrumental music for these two lines is illustrative of the *sono tubae* (sound of trumpets). The orchestra is like flame, its touch vibrant and its tone thrillingly bright and sharp.

The next section begins with the *Alleluia* "motto". Following this is the *Laudate Dominum*, *Laudate Eum*, sung now to a kind of ecclesiastical chant. Its ending is a flashing orchestral flourish, into which enters, at the climax, a most unfortunate reminiscence: nothing less than Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt*. These things happen. But in due time they are always obscured by the spirit of the work.

The instrumental prelude of part 2 is now repeated. To its short chords (a) the chorus articulate, in five detached phrases, the *Laudate Dominum* and the *Laudate Eum*. The instrumental climax that ensues is a most joyous clangour. The text of the next portion is the two lines "*Laudate Eum in timpano et choro*" and "*Laudate Eum in cordis et organo*". Sopranos and basses sing these together, in a kind of canon or imi-

tation, the basses a bar later. At the close of canonic duet the full chorus sing the second of the lines.

The music of the duet portion is not immediately easy to justify. It has a South German felling, — suave, sweet, and very flexible. Yet its origin lies with the *Alleluia*, and its function in the architecture of the movement is, first to afford a moment of lyrical relief, and secondly to prepare for the sequel.

4.

Stravinsky now gathers together the last three lines of the psalm. He wants to end his symphony with one simple idea, and he wants this to be essentially calm and pure,—the final expression of the clarity and sweetness that are figured in the music of the *Alleluia*. Beginning with "Laudate Eum in cymbalis bene sonantibus", the sopranos sway between the top three notes of the scale, (the key is E flat), while the altos enforce the rich subdominant — the note A flat. To the same music is given the next line "Laudate Eum in cymbalis jubilationibus". Then comes the *Laudate Dominum, Laudate Eum*, again in a kind of ecclesiastical chant. Attending this is a two-bar harmonic motive of typical discordancy: the motive is repeated again and again, and by its very persistence it establishes the sense of something inexorable and inevitable.

The simpler E flat music returns, bar for bar, to serve now as material for the last two lines of the psalm. The orchestral part continues to a pause; and then the symphony ends with the *Alleluia, Laudate Dominum* of the opening. All the music of the concluding E flat section (from the "cymbalis" to the "spiritus") moves in 6-bar phrases. The time is 3-2. But there is a 4-bar basso ostinato or "ground bass", the twelve notes of which follow their own rhythmical course, regardless of the 6-bar phrases of the main body. The total effect of this dual independence is one that probably merits the term sublimity.

Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 194)

permitting a substantially wider range of reproduced frequencies at this speed and therefore a similar contribution to reproductive fidelity. So much for the company's publicized statement.

From the above facts, it may be assumed that the 45 speed was not an arbitrary one, and once the record was in the works and reproducing units planned it was not regarded as feasible to turn back. However, many people in the sound field, to say nothing of record buyers, wonder why RCA Victor did not settle on the 33 1/3 speed which had been in use in radio and elsewhere for some years. By extending only slightly the diameter of their latest disc, sound authorities contend, the same results could have been accomplished. Be this as it may, the fact remains the new speed was adopted and has been placed on the market. What follows from here on in remains up to the record-buying public. There is no question that RCA Victor has manufactured a record far ahead of its standard 78 product. Whether the improvement of sound, definitely noticeable even on commercial equipment reproducing little above half the frequencies in the sound track, is sufficient to induce the buyer to purchase new equipment is a matter of personal decision. Many of us will want every improvement made in sound reproduction related to reproduced music. Accompanying housing difficulties may prove complex, but it should be pointed out once again that RCA Victor's player is a relatively small unit which offers less problem than many might suppose. Those of us who want the best in record reproduction — and this includes a consideration of artistry as well as tonal quality — will hardly be willing to concentrate on one record system. From the musician's standpoint, the long-playing disc has compensations that cannot be refuted; from the purely tonal aspect the new 45 offers a unique extended range experience to those owning high fidelity equipment. Too, the standard 78 retains our blessings, for within its grooves is engraved both music and artistry that may well never be challenged. It is hardly possible that all the music and artistry in the 78 records will be made available in the new speeds. The world moves onward, reproduced music improves, and the artists of today are better served, yet those of yesterday are not forgotten and never will be. We are reminded of Geraldine Farrar's remark that records become more "precious with each succeeding generation".

In line with this last thought, your editor would like to point out, especially to those

who assume a belligerent or arbitrary attitude toward records these days, that the enjoyment of music is far more important than concern over reproducing changes. Turning one's back on the phonograph is depriving oneself of music's enjoyment in the most personalized manner. No other sound-producing medium permits this. People who cannot afford modern automobiles get around in some very ancient contraptions and manage to enjoy themselves almost as much as their more fortunate neighbors. The function of the automobile is travel. The function of the phonograph is the reproduction of music. When a person says that he is not buying any more records because he cannot afford new improvements and/or does not wish another mechanical contraption in his home, we are reminded of the man who refuses to install a radio in an old car. Few people junk an old automobile, which still gets them around, because it is an obsolete model and they cannot afford a new one. To do so is to deny oneself a convenient and helpful means of travel. Those who would junk their records and phonograph because they are not the latest models deny themselves the benefits and pleasures of much fine music and artistry. Though, by and large, the car owner cannot add new improvements to an old model, this is not true in the case of the possessor of a phonograph of relatively recent vintage. The latter can acquire practical attachments to reproduce the latest in recordings, and in so doing increase his enjoyment of music.

* * *

Effective April 1st, Columbia reduced the prices on its 78 r.p.m. discs. The new prices, exclusive of tax, are as follows:

10" Popular.....	60c
12" Popular.....	85c
10" Masterworks.....	85c
12" Masterworks.....	\$1.00

Undoubtedly, competition in the record brought about the change in prices, yet the company's assertion that "it has been a long established policy of Columbia Records to bring more music to more people at lower cost" remains a fact. In 1940, Columbia was the first to cut the price of classical records in half. In issuing its Long Playing Microgroove disc last year, the company brought the price of recordings down con-

siderably. Those who buy the conventional 78s cannot but be grateful for this latest move.



The Singers' Toll of 1948

By Leo Riemans

My last year's article, which appeared in the March 1948 issue of this magazine, was actually written before the end of the year 1947. Hence, one famous singer, **Karl Joern**, who died on December 19, 1947 in Denver, Colorado, was not mentioned at the time.

Joern was born on January 5, 1873 (Caruso's birth year) in Riga, Latvia, of German parents. Although his family were poor, young Karl had the good fortune to be adopted by General Baron von Dellingshuasen, whose lost son Karl replaced. Joern discovered his voice at an early age and studied under a son of the famous Viennese Professor Ress. Making his debut at 23 in Freiburg, he was then engaged for one year at Zuerich, three years at Hamburg, and from 1902 at the Royal Opera in Berlin, where he became a particular favorite of the Kaiser. On January 22, 1909, he made his Metropolitan debut in *Die Meistersinger* and thereafter remained a member of that company until 1914, singing not only the lighter Wagnerian roles, but also scoring remarkable success in such lyric French operas as *Contes d'Hoffman*, *Manon* and *Faust*. Meantime, he had sung with success at La Scala, Milan, and the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires. He severed his contract with Berlin (where he had been Farrar's most consistent partner during her period there) in 1909, but he returned to the Charlottenburg Opera in 1914 to give the first performance of Parsifal in that house. During World War I, he stayed in America, obtaining citizenship, despite all efforts of the Kaiser to lure him back. Unfortunately, he interrupted his singing career for the uncertain job of prospecting. This finally resulted in his settling in Colorado. He invented a gadget, which he claimed would unfailingly locate all sorts of mineral deposits. The gadget proved unsuccessful, and he lost

most of his money. In 1928, Joern returned to the operatic stage with the German Opera Company, touring the United States with Gadskei, and graduating into the heavier Wagnerian class, singing Tristan for the first time. Though he was 55 then, he surprised all the critics by the vigor and beauty of his singing. During the last decade and a half of his life, he taught singing in Denver.

Joern was a prolific recorder, starting in the earliest period of G & T and remaining with H.M.V. until 1914, ending with a series of recordings from *Parsifal*. Some of these were issued by Victor, though in view of his popularity in the United States, regrettably few. Among the most sought-after discs are his duets with Farrar (made in 1906), his *Africana* aria where he surprisingly delivers a top D, the duets with Destinn, particularly from *Les Huguenots*. He also recorded complete versions (in German) of *Faust* and *Carmen* with Destinn. In America, he made discs and cylinders for Edison, and a group of German folksongs for Columbia.

On January 8, 1948, the world of music lost **Richard Tauber**. Though known to be a sick man, his death came unexpectedly. Only a few months before the very day, prior to undergoing an operation, he had sung Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with the Vienna Opera Company at Covent Garden, with much of his old beauty of tone and with true mastery of style. In some ways, Tauber can be called the German McCormack. Both were sincere and gifted musicians and artists, but both squandered precious years of their prime on music without value. Tauber was born May 16, 1892, the son of a famous actor. He originally studied composition and conducting, but soon discovered his voice, and made an early debut in 1913 at Chemnitz. The following year he was engaged by the Dresden Opera, where he remained for a decade. He sang, during that period, all the lyric roles in the repertoire, and made a long series of classical recordings for Odeon (acoustic) which remained the best he ever made. They include five duets with Elisabeth Rethberg and one with Lotte Lehmann. Those who chiefly know Tauber by his popular electrics should do well to listen to these early records, particularly the *Dalla sua pace* from *Don Giovanni* (in German). 'I often play this last as a pendant to McCormack's *Il mio tesoro*. Both are unique in their way. About 1924, he started to appear in Lehar operettas, which from then on were specially composed for him. Almost imperceptibly he drifted out of opera and into musical comedy, also appearing in several early German talking pictures. Like McCormack, he returned to his early love in his later days, and curiously enough his very last Parlophone recordings were of classic and operatic arias, all of which reveal his stylistic accomplishments and much beauty of tone.

With the death of **Hermine Kittel** at the age of 68 on March 4 was severed one of the last remaining links with the glorious days of the Vienna Imperial Opera under Mahler. She

was at that time the principle contralto. Hers was a long career at that opera house, lasting until 1932, though her final recordings date from 1914. Kittel sang in Bayreuth, but otherwise was seldom heard outside Vienna. Her records are rather rare and comparatively unknown except in Austria. I would recommend collectors to pay attention to them, as many are choice treasures. Her duet from *Martha* with Wilhelm Hesch contains a feat unique in gramophone history — a prolonged trill in unison by a contralto and a basso. Her *Djamileh* (Bizet) recordings are true gems, and her finale from *Carmen* with Slezak is the most realistic recording of this scene I have ever heard.

The soprano **Marie Tiffany**, who died on April 12, was for many years a minor member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, having made her debut there on December 25, 1916 as Haensel and the Sandman in *Haensel and Gretel*. She left a long list of Edison and Brunswick records, many of which disclose a light and charming voice.

Janet Spencer, who died May 19, was for many years a distinguished oratorio and concert contralto. Her career seems to have been short lived and was ended by World War I. For many years, her annual concerts in New York were regarded by many as important events in the music season. She made records for Victor, two of which were recently reissued in its Heritage series.

The records of **Rene Rivienne** (born 1880) are less known. This American soprano, who died June 8, was a member of Henry Savage's Opera Company, and one of the first singers of Mme. Butterfly to tour America. She sang the role (in English) in a series of records made by Columbia, with Vernon Stiles and Harriet Behnes. Her discs, eight in number were single sided Columbia Tricolors, issued in 1907. It is unfortunate that little biographical information is available on this singer or the two above.

Hubert Eisdell, who died in Canada on May 30, had an almost exclusively British career. He made many recordings for British Columbia, but does not seem to have rated any biographical data in catalogues or musical histories. He was a well known oratorio and concert singer. As the tenor soloist in Beecham's first *Messiah* recording, he gained considerable prestige in the record world, but Eisdell made many records in the acoustic era among which was a complete version of Quilter's song cycle *To Julia*, sung to its original string quartet accompaniment.

Completely unknown to American collectors are the two records made by the soprano, **Giuseppina Cobelli**, who died in Italy on September 2. Even her name may be unknown, though she was perhaps the most interesting artist on the Italian operatic stage during the 1920s and 1930s. I have never understood why she was not internationally more famous. In

1924, she sang a full season in Holland, appearing in dramatic roles, and from then until 1931 she returned yearly for guest performances in *La Tosca*, *Louise*, *Adriana Lecouvreur* and other operas. She sang at La Scala for many years, where she was always selected to create new roles, and to appear in parts which were enhanced by her wonderful acting. She sang Isolde under Toscanini. Her Kundry and Sieglinde were unsurpassed in Italy. Though she was a specialist in such operas as *Fanciulla del West*, *Fedora*, and *Tosca*, she sang with equal success the Countess in *Figaro*, and even operas of Monteverdi. As a pupil of Marschisio, her splendid voice was perfectly schooled, but what made her unique was her interpretative mastery. In many ways she can be compared to Claudia Muzio, though not two voices were ever more different. This great soprano, who in Italy enjoyed a fame second to none, made only two acoustic records, both issued by H.M.V. on the cheap, green label. Each is coupled with a solo by the tenor Giorgini. As they were never sold outside of Italy and had only a short life, they will someday become top rarities. Cobelli retired about five years ago, still in her prime, stricken by the greatest tragedy that can befall any musician — total deafness.

Though not nearly as great a singer or artist as Cobelli, **Bianca Scacciati**, who died on October 15, is much better known in the United States, and may enjoy a greater immortality through her numerous records. She made many recordings for Columbia, including the Leonora and Tosca in the complete recordings of *Il Trovatore* and *La Tosca*. Though a contemporary of Cobelli, she was not blessed with as fine a voice. Her soprano was a typically strident Italian voice, and she cared more for volume of tone than for shades or nuances. She was best in the veristic roles, and in her time a popular Aida at La Scala.

Ferruccio Giannini, who died on September 17, was the father of the noted soprano, Dusolina. He was also a famous recording veteran. He might perhaps be even the very first well-known singer who ever recorded commercially in America, as his Berliners go back to 1896. His recording career ended in 1904 for Columbia. His best known record is his Columbia *Miserere* from *Il Trovatore*, in which the part of Leonora is taken by a particularly funny-sounding cornet.

Rosalie Chalia, another of the earliest of all gramophone artists passed away on November 16. Her real name was Rosalie Herrara. This soprano was born in Cuba in 1865. She had one season at the Metropolitan Opera (1898-99), making her debut as Santuzza. After this, she toured extensively with travelling opera companies. With Giannini and De Gogorza, she was the most prolific of the early recorders, and one of the few sopranos of the era who cut the wax with good results. One of her most remarkable records is a black label

Victor of around 1914, called *Una Noite*, the end of which displays the phenomenal range of her voice, well over two octaves. [This disc is not listed in Victor's domestic catalogues of 1912 to 1915. Presumably, it was included in Victor's special Spanish or South American catalogues.—Ed.]

The contralto **Josephine Jacoby**, who died on November 13, unfortunately left us few recordings. Nearly everybody has her quartets with Caruso, etc. from *Marta* and *Rigoletto*, and her *Flower Duet* from *Mme. Butterfly*, with Farrar, is also well known. It is curious that Victor never asked her to make some solo recordings, as hers was a smooth and pleasing voice. The only records she made were two-minute Edison cylinders, two of which were re-recorded and issued by IRCC.

Eliette Schenneberg, the contralto, died in Paris in November. She was only 40 years old. She recorded during the war. As she was regarded as an intelligent and conscientious singer, one is glad that souvenirs exist of her artistry. I am unable to recommend any of her records as to date I possess none. [She sang in the complete recording of Honegger's *La Danse des Morts*, H.M.V. DBS135/37.—Ed.]

At the time of writing this article, I receive the news from Hamburg of the death of **Julius von Scheidt** at the age of 71. This German baritone was one of a family of singers, like the three Schuetzendorf brothers. He is still survived by his elder sister Selma (born 1874) with whom he recorded for G & T, and his younger brother Robert (born 1879), also a baritone. There has been some confusion about these two baritones, especially because Julius was engaged in Cologne, and then went to Hamburg, while Robert originally sang in Hamburg and then went to Frankfurt. Luckily, they always used their full names, so it is easy to tell which was which. Julius had the best voice of the two, a fine lyric baritone not unlike Gerhard Huesch. His duets with sister Selma, especially from *Zauberfloete*, were long best sellers in Germany, surviving from 1906 until the advent of electrical recording.

COLLECTORS' ISSUES

WAGNER: *Lohengrin*—Euch Lueften, die mein Klagen; OFFENBACH: *Les Contes d'Hoffman*—Phoebus stoltz in Sonnenwagen, Frances Saville (soprano) with piano (1902). IRCC 3051, 10-inch disc, \$1.75.

MASSNET: *Le Mage*—Ah! parais! astre de mon ciel! Agustarello Affre (tenor) with piano (1902). GOUNOD: *Mireille*—Ange du Paradis. Adolphe Marechal (tenor) with piano (1905). IRCC 3052, 10-inch disc, \$1.75.

BIZET: *Les Pêcheurs de Perles—De mon amie;*
HAHN: *Offrande.* Reynaldo Hahn (tenor)
 accompanying himself at the piano. (1910).
 IRCC 3053, 10-inch disc, \$1.75.

PACINI: *Saffo—L'ama ognor qual'io.* Eugenia
 Burzio (soprano) with piano. **ROSSINI:**
Semiramide—Bel raggio lusinghier. Rosalia
 Chalia (soprano) with piano (1896). IRCC
 3054, 10-inch disc, \$1.75.

MASSENET: *Thais—L'amour est une vertu
 rare;* **BEMBERG:** *Chant Vénitien.* Mary
 Garden (soprano) with orchestra and piano
 respectively. (1905). IRCC 3055, 10-inch
 disc, \$1.75.

● Frances Savelle, born in San Francisco and
 raised in Australia, was, according to her niece
 Frances Alda a very beautiful and capricious
 woman. Her voice, was described at the time
 of her Metropolitan debut in 1895 as resembling
 that of Emma Eames, but on a smaller scale.
 These two selections seem to bear out this
 appraisal. It is easy to recognize in the early
 recording a tonal concentration and purity of

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line that characterized other Marchesi pupils —
 Eames, Melba, Calvé and Suzanne Adams.
 Nowadays we cannot but be impressed by the
 versatility of the soprano who can turn from
 Wagner's Elsa (albeit a rather light Elsa) to the
 Doll in *The Tales of Hoffman*, but Miss Saville
 does it with ease. Though sung with less
 abandon than the florid Offenbach number, the
 Wagner emerges more clearly from the speaker,
 due, no doubt, to the fresher condition of the
 original from which the dubbing was made.

Agustarello Affre is new to me. He was how-
 ever, a prolific recorder in the early days of the
 century, and appears to have had a big reputa-
 tion in France. The voice, as we can hear it
 today, is beyond any question phenomenal —
 his nickname, the French Tamagno, seems apt,
 for the striking fullness of the tone carries up to
 an easy high B-flat at the end. The unfamiliar
 aria he sings is curiously like Gounod's air for
 Romeo, especially in its text, and at the same
 time recalls Massenet's own air for Jean in
Hérodiade.

The companion selection shows M. Marechal
 as the possessor of a more lyrical voice, indeed
 a voice with a suggestion of his compatriot
 Clement. His delivery of the high-lying melody
 is easy and appealing, and better recorded
 on the whole than that of Affre.

The Reynaldo Hahn coupling naturally re-
 veals a fresher voice than that we know by his
 electrical recordings. Though no one ever
 claimed that it was in any way a remarkable
 instrument, the singing has so many virtues we
 can almost believe that it was. Line, diction,
 Style, with a capital S, and in the Bizet wonder-
 fully neat passage work — somewhat clouded
 though they are by the early recording process,
 these performances may well taken as models.
 Though the nondescript voice was usually
 labeled a tenor, these two selections are pre-
 sented in baritone keys.

Eugenia Burzio is said to have won the admir-
 ation of no less a judge than Toscanini, and her
 records have long been collectors' prizes. This
 one is typical of the examples I have heard — a
 natural voice of unmistakably fine quality,
 produced with ease, but inclined to a blatty
 whiteness which was probably part and parcel
 of her passionate delivery of dramatic music.
 This sample gives no inkling of the size of the
 voice, but we may presume it was ample
 enough.

Rosalia Chalia, recently dead, shows up
 amazingly well in the earliest recording of all.
 The tone quality is lovely and the facility of the
 execution impressive in the extreme. If the
 intonation is a little indistinct, that is probably
 not her fault.

The Garden disc replaces IRCC 3007, on
 which the same originals were copied. The new
 version of the *Thais* air is cleaner and more
 forward than the old. The improvement
 seems to me less obvious in the Bemberg song.
 The legend that Garden had no voice is effec-
 tively dispelled by such recordings as these.
 There is an exting freshness and spark in the
 tone which even the Columbia discs of just a
 few years later did not catch. —P.L.M.



RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



LISZT: *Les Preludes (Symphonic Poem)*;
Leopold Stokowski and His Orchestra.
Victor set DM-1277, price \$2.50 (manual
3.50).

▲Stokowski, with a specially assembled orchestra of about 60 including some of the top notch soloists available in New York, still continues to give us reproduced performances that challenge the best made anywhere. The "his orchestra" caption on the record label is justifiable, as there are few conductors living who could assemble, rehearse and conduct an ensemble of this kind and make it play like a seasoned orchestra. Of course, Victor's engineers — working in

conjunction with the conductor — are responsible for the splendidly realistic recording. Only the other day, an engineer with the Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, informed us that he regarded the recent Victor recording of "Stokowski and his Orchestra" as among the finest orchestral discs made anywhere. He cited, as an outstanding example, the recent issue of Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela*, of which we previously had glowingly written. Here we have the same realistic clarity and quality of instrumental timbre and a balance that delights the ear on extended range equipment, and also the lovely oboe playing of Mitchell Miller. Even those weary of this overly familiar orchestral war horse can find enjoyment in the reproductive quality. There is only one point on which one can quibble and that is the lack of fulness and lushness of string quality that this composition demands. An

ensemble of 60 players can hardly accomplish results similar to a full symphony orchestra.

If discretion is the better part of valor, than temperance is the better part of emotion. Stokowski, in his interpretation of this work, which can hardly be a stranger to him after his long career in the concert hall, tempers Liszt's romanticism with artistic sobriety. His performance has a sincerity and forthrightness that recommends it. Only one disturbing element was found in the issue we heard — the surface noise on side 1 added an unpleasantly aggressive element to the production. The discs are inclosed in an envelope instead of an album, an innovation which saves the buyer money. —P.H.R.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*; Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 12-0763, price \$1.25.

▲Fiedler gives a rhythmically incisive and forthright performance. The conductor never fails to impress us with his ability to handle compositions of this kind with genuine wholesomeness and vigor. The recording is tops. —P.G.

MARTUCCI: *Novelletta, Op. 82*; Orchestra Sinfonia dell'EIAR, direction of Willy Ferrero. Ccetra disc BB25095, price \$2.50.

▲Guiseppe Martucci (1856-1909) is rightfully revered in Italy. A gifted composer, conductor and pianist, he was one of the first musicians to cultivate symphonic and chamber music in his own land. It seems strange that neither one of Martucci's two symphonies have been recorded for they have an undeniable limpid charm and melodic spontaneity. Only his *Notturmo* and *Novelletta*, from the set of *Little Pieces* for orchestra are available. These, as well as the symphonies, are not unfamiliar to American listeners as Toscanini has played them on many occasions. It is not difficult to understand Toscanini's devotion to these essentially lyrical Italian works, dated though they may be. The *Novelletta*, originally a piano piece, is an imaginative little scherzo effectively scored. Ferrero gives it an engagingly alert and incisive performance. The recording, while not extended range, is good. —P.H.R.

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90 (Italian)*; The Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by George Szell. Columbia set MM-733, three discs, price \$4.00, or Microgroove disc ML 4127 (coupled with Mendelssohn: *Capriccio brillante*), price \$4.85.

▲In December, we had a new recording of this popular symphony by Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra. Last season, Szell conducted the Cleveland Orchestra in a Mendelssohn centennial cycle and his performance of this work was regarded as the landmark of the series. Szell adopts a slightly faster tempo in the opening movement than most conductors, though this is not without precedent as those who remember the early Hamilton Harty recording will tell you. The same taut energy, evidenced in his recent Mozart *E flat Symphony*, prevails. The opening and closing movements have an athletic stride, an assertive emphasis, that makes for a dry crispness of string tone. The opening string passages are strident. There is little of the polish that Koussevitzky achieves. Szell's reading, however, is probably as valid as Koussevitzky's. It is all a matter of what one considers Mendelssohn intended in his musical recounting of a year spent in Italy. There is plenty of healthy exhilaration in the music and more than a hint of strong sunlight and bracing air. But even in his quick movements Mendelssohn devised moments of gentler and tenderer feeling. On the strength of improvements in Beecham's Sibelius' *Seventh Symphony*, in the long-playing version, one wishes Columbia had redone his rendition of this symphony. Szell tends to keep the coloring of the music more or less black and white, while Koussevitzky with his flair for elegance achieves a wider range of tonal timbre. That elegance was one of Mendelssohn's chief attributes few musicians would refute. The expert manner in which Szell handles his orchestral forces, the breadth and precision he attains, are qualities that make for some excitement. Unquestionably, many will endorse his interpretation. It is a much healthier and fresher one than the Unger performance, put out by Decca last year.

The recording is good, though lacking in the spaciousness of sound which I seem to remember in some earlier Cleveland releases.

The long-playing version seems to me the best bet, particularly as it is coupled with the Mitropoulos-Graudan performance of the composer's *Capriccio brilliant*, which is reproduced better than originally. —P.H.R.

RAVEL: Suite — *Ma Mere l'Ove*; Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set DM-1268, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲Koussevitzky's early, much-admired recording of this work, which dates back fifteen years or so, is hereby replaced with a handsome new version. The Boston conductor has made a specialty of this music, refining the orchestral playing by painstaking rehearsal to the last centimetre of correctness in balance and rhythm. If the whole thing sounds a bit tired and world-weary; well, that is the nature of the work.

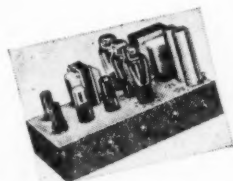
Fairy images are recreated through the veiled eyelids of the sophisticate. There are no wide-eyed fairies with gauze wings here;

Ravel's sprites have been around. To further emphasize his feelings toward them, the composer not only spins his yarns with the crystal clarity of the great storyteller, but further ponders their morals in contemplative, delicately tinted phrases.

Other conductors have given a good account of this score, notably Albert Wolff and Piero Coppola, but none have captured the mystic, almost oriental quality that lurks in the music, the adult dismay and dissatisfaction with the outcome of these childish fancies. —A.W.P.

SCHUMANN: *Manfred — Overture, Op. 115*, and **BEETHOVEN:** *Consecration of the House—Overture, Op. 124*; NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Victor set DM-1287, three discs, price \$4.75 (manual \$5.75).

▲Neither of these works have found favor with music listeners commensurate with their qualities. Hence one is pleased to have Toscanini, whose admiration for them has



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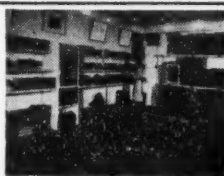
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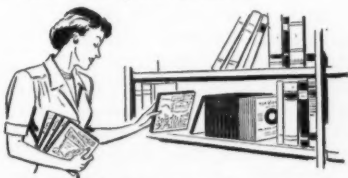
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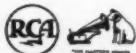
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been evidenced through the years, performing them on records. His penetrating musical insight illumines the music of both with characteristic vitality. It is amazing to note the indefatigable drive of the conductor's interpretations and the concentration of energy and thought that underlies his work.

The overture from Schumann's incidental music to Byron's drama, *Manfred*, remains one of his most persuasive orchestral work. Here his orchestral writing attains a high peak. One agrees with the late Sir W. H. Hadow that "from the first note to the last it is as magnificent as an Alpine storm, somber, wild, impetuous, echoing from peak to peak with the shock of thunder-clouds and the clamour of the driving wind". This is not extravagant praise characteristic of its period of writing (1892), rather it a just appraisal imaginatively set forth. Too few people read Hadow these days, yet his two-volume set of *Studies in Modern Music* are far from outdated and well worth perusal and study. In this overture, Schumann comes closer to the spirit of Beethoven than anywhere else. It is Hadow who points out that a "sense of effort", apparent in all of Schumann's orchestral work, places this music on a lower level than the concealed art of Beethoven. The knowledge of this undoubtedly prompted Toscanini's placement of this composition before the Beethoven. In association with Schumann's *Manfred*, it is interesting to know that a lack of courage on his part prevented the work from being dedicated to Queen Victoria of England, whom the composer admired.

The Beethoven is in reality a second overture to the play *The Ruins of Athens*. The latter in a new adaption was chosen to open the Josephstadt Theater in Vienna, October 1822. A far more imposing and ambitious work than its predecessor, this overture found its impetus in the composer's admiration of Handel's theater style, and according to some writers owes something to Mozart's overture to *The Magic Flute*. The march-like opening is both pompous and festal. The section with the runs in the bassoon and the violins has been described as the "hurrying and excitement" of the crowd. The main body of the overture in fugato style is ingeniously conceived and carried out. There is a majesty and musical sapience to

this work that sets it apart from all other overtures of Beethoven.

The Schumann has no competition either as a performance or as a recording. An earlier release by Boult and the B.B.C. Symphony, dating from 1934, has long been withdrawn from the catalogue. The present recording, made in Carnegie Hall, is exceptionally fine in its tonal resonance and spaciousness. The Beethoven, made more recently in Studio 8H, lacks the best qualities of the former; there is a tightness in the string tone and a lack of similar qualitative expansion in the fortissimos. In many ways, the 1939 recording by Fielder and the Boston "Pops" fares better in this respect, but neither his performance nor Weingartner's made the same year in Europe attains the driving intensity of Toscanini, and both are too deliberately paced.

STRAUSS (arr. Doebbler after Singer):
Der Rosenkavalier — *Waltzes*; Boston
"Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur
Fiedler. Victor disc 12-0762, price \$1.25.

▲The arrangement here appeals to me less than most, it seems a bit disjointed. However, it should be noted, that without scores one can hardly discuss arrangements intelligently, and it may be that others have used this one without label credit. Of course, the Boston "Pops" Orchestra plays with its usual polish and brilliance and the recording is bright and tonally realistic. Mr. Fiedler, who knows his Viennese waltz technique, avoids unnecessary melodic languishing. The surface noise on my disc was too competitive to the music for my liking. —P.H.R.



BARTOK: *First Violin Sonata*; played by
Yehudi Menuhin (violin) and Adolph
Baller (piano). Victor set DM-1286, four
discs, price \$6.00.

▲As far as can be ascertained from standard references, this is a first recording anywhere. The more Bartok on records, the better. He was a great composer, but a difficult one to assimilate, and on records one can play a

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work over and over again until the form and logic are revealed. Of course there are some Bartok pieces that can be enjoyed on first hearing, such as the *Third Piano Concerto*, the *Concerto for Orchestra*, some of the *Mikrokosmos* piano pieces, or the violin concerto that Menuhin recorded with the Dallas Symphony. The present sonata, however, is not one of those.

On first hearings it is forbidding. Dissonances prevail, melody does not seem to be anywhere around, and often the piano sounds as though it is the mortal enemy of the violin. "What was Bartok trying to do?" one asks. Well, he was trying to do many things, but writing "pretty music" was not one of them. Just as a modern artist distorts lines and color for certain expressive ends, so Bartok distorted musical lines and colors for similar reasons. Behind it all, however, was the Magyar flavor, never entirely absent from anything Bartok ever wrote. Consider the second movement here, with the lament of the violin in an exotic scale that suggests everything in Hungarian Gypsy music without ever exactly being Hungarian Gypsy music (the opening of side 5 is a good example). The last movement is the most obvious and orthodox in nationalistic flavor, but the entire sonata is drenched through with that feeling, though it may take several hearings before such a fact is realized.

Even those who do not especially like Bartok's idiom are forced to admit the strength and musicianship behind it. Bartok's music, too, always has individuality, with nothing of the conventional type of modernism affected by many of today's musicians. The slashing, grating harmonies and attacks of the last movement in this sonata — a mad, almost hysterical dance — could not be duplicated by anybody. They are a reflection of the man. You may not like it, but there it is. Listen, however, to this movement without an preconceived notions. Meet Bartok halfway, and you will see his impressionistic (not the exact word, but there is no other) treatment of Magyar rhythms — not in the pink tea style of Liszt or Brahms, or the lovely but polite style of Dvorak, but with an elemental, down-to-earth force.

There are few criteria for evaluating Menuhin's performance. I have heard only

two concert versions of this work, neither of which had Menuhin's fullness of tone. Learning the notes of such a long and difficult piece is alone an achievement worthy of respect, and having the music on records is an occasion for rejoicing, so why spoil it all by listing a few minor reservations about the playing? For the most part the violinist performs with fervor, and is ably partnered by Adolph Baller, whose assignment here is one of the most difficult he ever will encounter. The recording is a little over-cut, but presents no problems that a good pick-up and stylus cannot handle. This matter of a stylus is very important. Too many people blame the recording characteristics of a record when the only thing the matter is a worn stylus point that causes a shatter or fuzziness in the higher frequencies.

—H.C.S.

HUE: *Fantasie for Flute and Piano*; Julius Baker (flute) and Sidney Raphael (piano). Woodwind disc 503, price \$1.50.

▲George Hue, a conservative French composer who has outlived the Victorian age, is best known in this country for his songs, in particular, his *J'ai pleuré en rêve*. Although the flute is (unofficially, at least) the national instrument of France, which country has turned out more outstanding flutists than all its nearest competitors, Hue has apparently not found any special appeal in its capabilities. He has done little to exploit the possibilities of the instrument, preferring rather to provide an undistinguished piece that smacks of watered-down Debussy. Actually, it makes for pleasant enough listening, mostly because of the stylish playing of Julius Baker.

—A.W.P.

MOZART: *Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, Vol. II* — *Sonata in E flat, K. 302*; *Sonata in D major, K. 306*; Alexander Schneider and Ralph Kirkpatrick. Columbia set MM-811, four discs, price \$6.00, or Microgroove set SL 52 (coupled with Vol. I), price \$9.70.

▲One is filled with mixed feelings of admiration for the fine musicianship of the performers and disapproval for the use of the harpsichord. Both of these works are so eminently pianistic and authorities are generally in agreement that Mozart intended

the use of the more modern instrument. The harpsichord tends to swamp the violin on occasion, to obliterate certain figures and relegate some phrases too much to the background. To be sure, these and other similar works were published as "sonatas for the piano and violin" (parenthetically "or harpsichord" appeared on many editions). Hence, the sponsors of the records have not recognized the significance of the keyboard instrument in the album title.

These are the first recordings of both sonatas, and for this reason most welcome ones. Their concertante characteristics make them equally ideal works for both performers. Some of the earlier piano and violin sonatas can be played on the piano alone, without loss of any essential melodic features. Mozart composed these compositions after a visit to Paris in 1778 which may account for the (lan of the opening movement of K. 302. This sonata has only two movements, both of which are particularly alive and refreshing. One agrees with Eric Blom that "the gentle gravity of the *andante grazioso* rondo makes a slow middle movement superfluous". The *D major Sonata* has three movements. It is a brilliant composition, related, says Einstein, to the violin concertos of 1775. No Mozart enthusiast will pass up this album, not alone for the quality of the music but for the enthusiasm and technical expertness of the performers. Personally, I find the reproduction of the long-playing versions preferable to the standard 78s, on my machine the harpsichord seems better balanced. The l.p. set offers duplications of the performances by Kraus and Goldberg, still unchallenged in my estimation, but its inclusion of the present works cannot be overlooked.

—P.H.R.



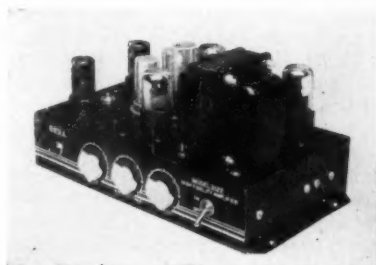
PAGANINI: *Caprices, Opus 1*; Zino Francescatti (violin) with Artur Balsam (piano). Columbia album MM-818, four discs, price \$5.00.

▲While the name of Paganini does not seem to have the appeal of Wieniawski or Vieux-

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temps to the fiddler of this generation, he is nevertheless the spiritual grandfather of all modern concert violinists. It is therefore extremely fitting that his *Caprices*, frankly designed for display and for little else, be recorded by Francescatti, now at the peak of his attainments, unquestionably the outstanding violinist concertizing today. His impeccable technique, enchanting tone and sensitive artistry are shown off to good advantage by the careful attentions of Columbia's engineers.

Eight of the *Caprices* (in reality etudes for the violin) are included in this set: 9, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, and 24. The last named has been used by Brahms, Rachmaninov and Benny Goodman as a theme for variation treatment. Originally written for violin alone, they are usually performed with piano, possibly to woo the attentions of those misguided individuals who retire to the lobby for a cigarette whenever "for violin alone" appears on a concert program. Francescatti follows this custom, utilizing the inoffensive fabrications of Mario Pilati, which are competently played by Artur Balsam.

Students of the violin can learn much from Francescatti's exemplary performances. Listeners of more general interests should find these pieces more appetizing than the general run of concert encores, especially if they recall the fabulous tales associated with Paganini and care to speculate how accurately he set down for future (and competitive contemporary) players the gems of his repertoire.

—A.W.P.

RACHMANINOFF (arr. Press): *Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14*; RAVEL (arr. Roques): *Minuet from Sonatine for Piano*; TANS-MAN: *Movement Perpetual*; Jascha Heifetz (violin) with Emanuel Bay at the piano. Victor disc 12-0765, price \$1.25.

▲The Rachmaninoff is well suited to violin transcription, where the tonal quality of different strings, prevent the monotony of the human voice in a piece of this kind. Heifetz invests it with tonal beauty. The Ravel is less successful as its melodic expression was never intended to be centered in one line. It sounds like a different piece than the original. The Tansman, played spicato with muted violin, is ingeniously devised with a rhythmic insistence that creates an effect, as one writer

states, "like an angry bee buzzing around a banjo player". Heifetz handles this tricky little trifle with the utmost ease. The recording features the violin, the piano remains discreetly in the background. —J.N.



STRAVINSKY: *Concerto for Two Pianos*; Vera Appletton and Michael Field. Vox set 634, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲The severities of this composition may on first acquaintance cause many to abandon listening before completing any one of the six record sides. The tonal texture is consistently dry and the work as a whole is completely abstruse. Yet, for the musician this opus cannot fail to have a fascination, its structure has been so carefully and minutely planned that one realizes that its subject matter or mode of operation is its principle motivation. This has been found by others to relate to Beethoven's last piano sonatas, without the emotional implications of the latter, though the spirit of Bach also hovers in the background. Stravinsky is more concerned with the esthetics of technique than emotion in this music. There is no looseness or vagueness in phraseology here, everything is planned with logic and an uncompromising will power. Those especially fond of the composer's earlier works may find unpleasant this new idiom of the composer's creative urge. Such people, Stravinsky tells us in his Autobiography, "cannot and will not follow me in my musical thought. What moves and delights me leaves them indifferent, and what still continues to interest them holds no further attraction for me." Those, however, who know and admire the composer's later works will be glad that this composition has been at long last recorded. There is both loftiness of thought, strength of purpose and emotional vehemence to this music, despite its brusque transitions. The opening sonata movement is turbulent, the second, marked *Notturmo*, harkens back to a Baroque style, and the finale is a group of extended variations ending in a fugue.

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sician, Edward Tatnall Canby, who understands and appreciates the composer's music. His detailed analysis cannot fail to assist the inquiring music listener.

The performance is a brilliant and technically accomplished one. I do not feel qualified to speak on the full merits of the interpretation, yet I feel the efforts to sustain brilliance throughout might have been advantageously tempered on occasion with some polish and urbanity. —P.H.R.



Arr. BRAGA: *Folk Songs of Brazil*; Bidu Sayao (soprano) with Milne Charnley (piano). Columbia set MM-812, four discs, price \$5.00.

▲Recalling the excellent work of Elsie Houston in this field, I greeted the arrival of this album with eager anticipation. That it does not come up to expectations and cannot fairly be recommended, is more than a little disappointing. Miss Sayao's cultured, little-girl voice is completely out of place here. She is the refined lady, singing prettied-up versions of the peasants' songs in her salon of a Sunday afternoon, carefully controlling each phrase, as she would in a song by Hahn or an aria by Donizetti.

This earthy music calls for a singer who can sustain a strongly soaring vocal line, yet handle florid ornamentation with flexible abandon. Singers such as Elsie Houston, Madeleine Grey, or Corinne Mura. The piano accompaniments must be criticized for the same failing, the complete deodorization of the strong peasant flavor that is the backbone of this music. —A.W.P.

FRANCK: *Panis Angelicus*; and GODARD: *Jocelyn — Berceuse*; James Melton (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra, conducted by Frank Black. Victor disc 12-9764, price \$1.25.

▲When the Easter season rolls around Franck's *Panis Angelicus* is usually heard on the radio and elsewhere. Melton sings this familiar selection with manly fervor, to an

orchestral accompaniment far more elaborate than the composer intended. Here the tenor recalls John McCormack even to the nasality of sound in his "e" vowels. It is almost satirizing at the beginning of the Godard air how Melton revives memories of McCormack in the opening phrases, but thereafter he shows less sensibility. It is a breach of artistic taste, in my estimation, to sing the first verse in French and the second in English, to say nothing of dragging in a solo cello in the latter. One suspects this disc was contrived for Melton's enthusiastic, but uncritical, radio listeners. —J.N.

HUHN: *Invictus*; and CLARKE: *The Blind Ploughman*; Robert Merrill (baritone) with Leila Edwards at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc, 10-1462, price \$1.00.

▲Mr. Merrill gives sturdy, manly performances of two popular ballads. A fine balance between piano and voice adds to the enjoyment of the baritone's singing. —J.N.

PORTER: *Kiss Me, Kate*; Alfred Drake, Patricia Morison, Lisa Kirk, Harold Lang, etc. with orchestra conducted by Pembroke Davenport. Columbia set C-200, price \$7.00 or L.P. disc ML-4140, price \$4.85.

▲For those who have had the good fortune to see the current New York musical hit, Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate*, this collection of music from that show is a happy souvenir. For those not yet able to do so, it is an authentic introduction to the sentimental sections that are mauled daily on the radio and a chance to sample the clever lyrics (some of which are too rough for radio's sheltered customers) that flash by all too quickly in the rapid pace of the show's action. The original cast, headed by the talented baritone Alfred Drake of *Oklahoma!* fame, have recorded portions of all the numbers except *I Sing of Love*, a minor cavatina of little importance.

As you undoubtedly know by now, Porter and the Spewacks, who prepared the book, have culled the meat from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, simplified the action for twentieth-century one-track minds, adapting the time-tested farce to the special requirements of sophisticated musical comedy.

For home listening, such rollicking numbers as *We Open in Venice*, *Tom, Dick, or Harry*, and *Where is the Life that Once I led* seem to be more satisfactory than the ballads, those fragile creations requiring the services of more experienced singers than are available from the cast. Any reservations about the performances on these records must except Drake, who milks every phrase for maximum effect. Special mention, too, should be made of Harry Clark and Jack Diamond's elegant rendition of *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*.

—A.W.P.

STRAVINSKY: *Symphony of the Psalms*; The Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra with Mixed Chorus, conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Columbia set MM-814, three discs, price \$4.00; Microgroove Disc ML 6129 (coupled with Stravinsky: *Symphony in Three Movements*), price \$4.85.

▲Ansermet's performance of this work was discussed in our September 1948 issue. The Swiss conductor remains one of the composer's most persuasive interpreters, yet — it has always seemed to me — that Stravinsky with his more incisive beat, presents a strong argument in defense of the composer-conductor each time in recent years that he has recorded one of his own works. It is at once the directness of his approach to his own music and his rhythmic precision, the sober coloring of his tonal texture which inevitably dignifies its expressivity. This is borne out in the present performance which is excellently recorded, with a better proportioned chorus than in the Ansermet version. The balance between the two forces has been exceptionally well handled. As a musician, I welcome the long-playing versions of this and the recently recorded symphony, for both compositions demand sustained moods. Stravinsky's absorption with religious thought and action suffers with the interruptions in the regular set, its accumulative powers and intensity are not rightfully substantiated.

The *Symphony of the Psalms* still remains a controversial work. Its abstruseness and complexity, however, are less formidable than many would have us believe. Even its

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fugue proves less hard to understand than one may think on first acquaintance. As to the finale, in which our previous reviewer professed to find "an overtone of mawkishness", this probably remains the most satisfying section of the score to most listeners. Emotionally it makes more sense than the fugue, but it lacks the strength of the opening movement. It is obvious — but obvious in the right way. I concur with Mr. Grew (see article in this issue) that this is one of Stravinsky's greatest works. —P.H.R.

VERDI: *Il Trovatore* — *Ai nostri monti*; Cloe Elmo (mezzo-soprano) and Beniamino Gigli (tenor) with orchestra, conducted by Umberto Berrettoni, and **LALO: *Le Roi d'Ys* — *Vainement, ma bien aimée*;** Beniamino Gigli with Royal Opera House Orchestra, conducted by Rainaldo Zambono. Victor disc 12-0767, price \$1.25.

▲Miss Elmo is vocally at her best in the *Trovatore*, and Gigli handles his part in a manner which recalls old times. There is stylistic dignity and sentient warmth from both participants. This is a record which operatic enthusiasts will welcome and cherish. Of the Lalo, one cannot speak as enthusiastically. Gigli is rather anemic and hesitant, moreover his retards are overlong and disrupting to the rhythmic pulse, and his Italianate French most disturbing on occasion. Those who know the old Clement record of this aria (Victor 6062) despite its poor accompaniment, would hardly be minded to transfer their affections to Gigli. The orchestral accompaniments in both these selections are most effectively handled, and superbly recorded. —J.N.

Recent Importations

▲Until recordings of his works began to filter into this country, the music of the Danish composer Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), a pupil of Nils Gade, was practically not known here. The composer's name was often mentioned in reports of international musical activities; he had a considerable reputation in Europe's informed circles, but here,

although primarily a symphonist, he has been represented merely by a handful of violin and piano pieces. An excellent introduction to Nielsen's musical personality is his second symphony, subtitled *The Four Temperaments*, which has been excellently recorded by the Danish State Radio Symphony conducted by Thomas Jensen (HMV discs GZ7000/3). Obviously a product of the 19th century (to be sure, the first performance was in December, 1902), the symphony does not fit into any particular school or classification. There are echoes of Mahler—a Mahler divested of Wagnerian excess and teutonic smugness, yet the music has a flavor that can only be described as Nielsen's own.

The *Third Quartet* in E flat (Opus 14) further strengthens the notion that Nielsen's style is distinctive and personal. One notes the preoccupation with formal, sturdy craftsmanship, the unflinching good taste. Probably the best of the movements is the *Andante sostenuto*, which has a certain depth, a professional profundity that excludes the baser elements of sentiment. The recording is by the Erling Bloch Quartet of Copenhagen (HMV discs DB20100/3), a seasoned group of instrumentalists who play with commendable ensemble. Although Bloch's tone is a bit thin for the nature of the music, it is a first-rate performance.

Less successful, both as to content and execution, is the *Clarinet Concerto* (Opus 57), played by Louis Cahuzac with the Royal Theatre Orchestra (English Columbia LD-X7000/2). The music seems to lie well for the fingers and to evoke the spirit of the instrument, but the soloist is somewhat too aggressively intense, nor does he have sufficient technique to make one forget the effort involved. A short piece by Nielsen that I heartily recommend is *A Saga Dream*, an imaginative tone poem rich in orchestral colorings and conceived in economy of structure. It is sympathetically played by the Royal Theatre Orchestra conducted by Egisto Tango on HMV disc DB5263.

The *Quintet for Wind Instruments* (Opus 43), very well played by a Danish group on HMV discs DB200/3, is considerably more austere than the other works discussed here. Although Nielsen has clung to the romantic idiom, both rhythmically and harmonically, he has divested this piece of the frivolous

trappings of its basic genre and permitted the stark statement of its intellectual content to have its say. I consider this a very fine score, one of the best in the limited literature of the woodwind quintet.

To break away from Nielsen, I would like to report that the Syzmanowski *Violin Concerto* mentioned by Sackville West recently (Parlophone SW8101/2) has reached these shores. It sounds very well over here, too. Those who know and like *Tintagel* and the *Third Symphony* of Arnold Bax will undoubtedly be disappointed with his *Garden of Fand* (HMV discs DB6654/5). Persuasively set forth by Beecham and his Royal Philharmonic, it is still little more than a conglomeration of impressionistic effects jumbled together with little direction or purpose.

A release more notable for good engineering than for musical quality is the Handel *Organ Concerto No. 9 in B flat* (Opus 7, No. 3) "arranged by Sir Henry J. Wood" and played by George Thalben-Ball (HMV discs C3814/6). The grandiose qualities and infectious rhythms one expects from Handel are unquestionably present, but in a strangely diluted and stirred-up form. Apparently the composer was suddenly in need of a new concerto and whipped up this grand potpourri of left-overs for the occasion. One movement is a set of variations on the *Hallelujah Chorus*, another utilizes a familiar theme, which is, if I remember correctly, the slow section of the Overture to *Berenice*. The whole affair has a certain cheapness to its makeup that is cheerfully matched by the ministrations of Sir Henry in "modernizing" the orchestration. Thalben-Ball and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Susskind play it with a spiritous zest that has been exceedingly well captured by the engineers.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's *L'Amero, saro costante* (English Columbia LX1096) is an admirable addition to her growing phonograph repertory. This aria, from the second act of *Il Re Pastore*, is a particularly beautiful example of Mozart's technique of vocal writing. Schwarzkopf does it full justice, with the assistance of Josef Krips and the Vienna Philharmonic.

Two new recordings made in England by Kirsten Flagstad are now available here. Isolde's *Narrative and Curse* from the first act of *Tristan* (HMV discs DB6748/9), with

the contralto Elisabeth Hoegen as Brangäne and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Dobrowen, finds the celebrated Norwegian soprano somewhat shrill and ill at ease, probably because of the vagaries of the orchestral support. The odd side contains *Im Treibhaus*, one of the Wesendonck songs, which is sung with the piano of Gerald Moore. That the defects of the *Tristan* excerpt are not an indication of vocal and artistic deterioration, but merely a passing discomfiture, are amply proven by the finale from *Goetterdaemmerung* (HMV discs DB6792/4), in which the same orchestra, revived by therapeutic powers of Furtwaengler, has shaken off its hangover of muddled lethargy to join with the soprano in a thrilling performance. Whatever the implications of the performers' political positions or the distaste one may feel for them as individuals, one

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Dear Friends:- The "exclusive" American or regional rights for the Milhaud and Vivaldi sets advertised by us in the March issue of this magazine prove not to be "exclusive" after all. The two concerns involved — one French and one Italian — naively extended "exclusive" rights to more than one of us. However, we can handle your orders as promptly and efficiently as anyone else. By the way, we have a keen desire to sell all of you some of those fine Discophiles Francais sets of works by Mozart, Bach, Rameau, Couperin, Monteverdi, etc. Why not ask about them?

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can not help but recognize the validity of their musical expression, which has made this set the best *Immolation* now available on records.

Iago's two major contributions to Verdi's *Otello* — *Era la Notte* and the *Credo* — have received powerful treatment from the Italian operatic baritone and cinema star, Gino Bechi (HMV disc DB6506). This is not singing to delight the heart of a vocal teacher, for the dry-voiced Bechi does everything but tear up the pages of the score and stamp on their mangled fragments. He is flat more often than on pitch; his voice has the quality of an ill-treated buzzsaw, yet his conception of Iago's character is more vividly alive, more electrifyingly malevolent, with more distilled venom than one would have thought possible from the impersonal medium of a twelve-inch disc. You probably won't like it; hear it, anyway. Paul Schoeffler, who was heard to good advantage in the recent *Elektra* set, is completely out of his element in these same two arias (Decca K1664). In addition, after wincing at the erratic support of Karl Rankl and the Philharmonia Orchestra, one wonders why this record was okayed for release.

Additional Reviews

BEETHOVEN: *Fantasia in G minor, Op. 77* (two sides); *Sonata in F sharp Major, Op. 78* (three sides); MENDELSSOHN: *Song Without Words in G major, Op. 62, No. 1*; played by Rudolf Serkin (piano). Columbia set MM-816, three discs, price \$3.95, or Microgroove disc ML/4128, price \$4.85 (coupled with Beethoven: *Trio in D, Op. 70, No. 1*).

▲What makes this set unusual is the *G minor Fantasia*, which has never before been recorded domestically and which is seldom played in concert. It is, in all truth, not a particularly distinguished piece of music. The emphasis here is on virtuosity, with brilliant scale passages and some tricky pianistic writing in contrary motion.

For Beethoven, it is formally disconnected, with a rather abrupt ending as though he suddenly got tired of the whole thing. Melodically it is weak, and though

it builds to a couple of big climaxes, the intellectual content is not of a high order. Perhaps the best thing about it is the dramatic opening, with its burst down the scale.

The sonata, of course, contains much more solid material, even though it has only two short movements. Most pianists — the last was Petri — have recorded it on two sides. Serkin, however, takes the long repeats in the first movement, which exactly doubles its length. Beethoven selected a peculiar key, for those days; if I am not mistaken, it is the only one of his works which consistently adheres to the tonality of F sharp major. This *Op. 78* is a bridge sonata leading to the last given works in that genre. Not as mystic or complicated as the latter are, it has a deceptively quiet first movement — more happens than one would believe from a careless listening — and a finale where Beethoven kicks up his heels a bit.

Serkin's playing is clear and intelligent. In the *Fantasia* he is a precise master of the difficulties, and in the sonata he curves the lyrical lines artfully. There are one or two places in the last movement where the left-hand lines might be a little clearer, but the spirit of his conception is unfailingly musical. The *Song Without Words* (previously recorded by Horowitz in his Mendelssohn album) is also an example of sensible, tasteful playing. As for the recording, the surfaces are a little too high and the level of piano sound a little too low. One might call the results adequate, but not much more. The L.P. version has not been heard.

—H.C.S.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55 (Eroica)*; Concertgebouw Orchestra, conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Capitol set EFL 2502, six discs.

▲Though the range of frequencies in this set may not be in the realm of so-called high-fidelity, it is nonetheless fine engineering in the best European tradition. Its realistic semblance lies in rich tonal sonority and equitable dynamics. I find the strings especially rich and full, more so than in some of our domestic orchestral releases, though the woodwinds are less satisfactorily featured. Naturally, comparison with Decca's FFRR recordings of the same orchestra is in the latter's favor.

It is unfortunate that Mengelberg became allied with the Nazis for he was always a dynamic and exciting conductor. To be sure, Mengelberg—like many strong-minded musicians—often superimposed his own ideas on those of the composer, throwing an unmistakable spotlight on himself. Somehow, I feel in performances of great works like this a dominating personality will always remain inseparable from the music's interpretation. Yet few would be guilty of such wilful alterations of pace as Mengelberg. One has only to listen to his rendition of the finale of this symphony where the propulsive drive is constantly altered in a manner to disturb the flow of the music. Throughout the performance in matters of retards and climactic effects, he is ever a law unto himself. Though it may be said that in every recording of this work, it is difficult to disregard the personality at the orchestral helm, none is similarly guilty of the same self-willed deviations from the composer's intentions. Technically, Mengelberg has always been dependable—his beat consistently firm and incisive. His interpretation of the present work, despite opposing personal convictions, has breadth and depth, a virtuosic sweep, and on occasion true eloquence. Behind it lies a lifetime of music-making, in which there has always been evidenced a prideful sincerity, motivated in my estimation as much by confident egoism as with any absorption of a composer and his music. Those who have admired Mengelberg's work for the phonograph will do well to hear this recording before purchasing it.

Capitol is to be congratulated on its smooth record surfaces, a decided boon in these days of so much groove-gravel.

—P.H.R.

GLUCK: *Alceste* — Overture; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwaengler. Capitol disc 81001. price

▲Gluck's genius for poetic expression is well evidenced in this music with its affecting expression of tragedy. As in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the composer intended his overture to *Alceste* to lead uninterruptedly into the open scene of the opera. In the theater, Einstein says, the concentration of this work "is set off by the amplitude of the [opening] mourn-

ing scene." Be that as it may, both of these overtures make fine concert selections. No one needs to know, in connection with the present one, anymore than its aim to give indication of the impending tragedy which follows in the opera house. Gluck obtains his ends by music of heartfelt expression which is deeply moving without being depressing. One does not listen to a half dozen bars before realizing the composer's greatness as a tone poet.

Furtwaengler's performance, while valid in mood and style, is over-deliberately paced and meticulously fashioned. An older version by Mengelberg probed dramatic implications more tellingly. The excellence of the recording and the splendid tonal quality and performance of the orchestra are attributes, however, in favor of this disc — also the smooth surfaces of the Capitol pressing. —P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: *Mathis der Maler*—Symphony; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Paul Hindemith. Capitol set ECL 2503, three discs, price

▲Though this recording dates from 1934, it is still most impressive, comparable to the H.M.V. ones (issued by Victor) of performances by Furtwaengler, made with the same

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orchestra. Despite the many notable improvements in reproduction in recent years, there are many older orchestral recordings which are still completely satisfying and enjoyable. This ranks among them. Though Ormandy accomplished a fine performance of this score in Victor's set 854, issued in January 1942, I have always leaned towards the Hindemith version, and the original Telefunken discs have long been in my library. There is better progression of mood and phrase in the composer's performance, in my estimation.

Some one once said that Hindemith's music, if not universally pleasing, has at least always been provocative. The symphony, *Mathis der Maler*, would seem to have been more widely admired than much of the composer's music on records, though it is nonetheless provocative. The work is made up of three episodes (depicting three pictures by Matthias the Painter) taken from an opera by the composer dealing with the 16th century artist, Mathis Gothart Nithart, better known as Mathis Gruenewald. The three movements are entitled "Concert of the Angels", "The Entombment", and "The Temptation of St. Anthony". When Ormandy's set was released in January 1942, our valued contributor, Harold C. Schonberg wrote an article on this symphony, which we illustrated with reproductions of Gruenewald's paintings. It cannot be said that familiarity with these serves the work to any great advantage. Hindemith's music is hardly a recognizable translation of sight into sound. The personality of the composer is inseparable from his work, and its mood is definitely of our own times rather than Gruenewald's. To quote H.C.S.: "If one can invent a category new to music history, the term 'realistic impressionism' would not be far amiss in describing a work like *Mathis der Maler*, which owns harmonizations that take root in atonalism and polyphony, which could have been composed only since the turn of the century and yet which is so probing a study of the Gothic spirit." Concurring with H.C.S. prompts me to quote further: "as far as the symphony goes, one can divorce the music from the text and listen to it as absolute music, with the titles suggesting a key to the moods and not to musical interpretations, à la Richard Strauss, of the action de-

picted therein". This is music well worth investigation, typical of a modern German mind, one of warmest and most immediately accessible works of the composer on records. —P.H.R.

In The Popular Vein

Enzo Archetti

Mississippi Flyer and *Look-Up*; Victor 20-3340. *Congratulations* and *Bye Bye Blues*; Victor 20-3237. Tex Beneke and His Orchestra. Vocals by Garry Stevens, Tex, and The Moonlight Serenaders.

● The *Blues*, the only all-orchestral number in the bunch, is the only number worthy of the name of Beneke. Its soft swing and mellow melody is in the beloved Glenn Miller tradition. The others have too much vocal. *Mississippi Flyer* might have been a good train number but for that.

That's the Way He Does It and *Daddy-O* (from "A Song Is Born"); Victor 20-3065. *I'm Gonna Get Lost From You* and *The Gal Who's Got My Heart*; Victor 20-3016. *I Want A Little Girl and Gee, But It's Good To Be*; Victor 20-3016. *You Say the Nicest Things, Baby* (from *As the Girls Go*) and *No Moon At All*; Victor 20-3345. The Page Cavanaugh Trio. Vocals by The Trio, Page Cavanaugh, and Lillian Lane.

● A monotonous bunch of records to play successively. The uniformity of sound, swing, and mood may be fine as conversation background at a cocktail bar but pretty dull listening at home.

Lullaby In Rhythm and *Birdland*; Charlie Ventura and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3346.

● A swing number, in the older jazz sense, and some bebop — both arranged to show off Ventura's prodigious technique on sax. Not too interesting musically but exciting while the numbers last. Good recording.

She's A Home Girl and *Careless Hands*; Mel Torme, with Sonny Burke and His Orchestra. Capitol 15379.

● The orchestra is the star of these recordings. It has more to say than the Velvet Fog.

How Come the Mortgage Got Paid and I've Been Waitin' For Your Phone Call For Eighteen Years; Beatrice Kay, with Orchestra under the direction of Mitchell Ayres. Columbia 38373.

●The impishly subtle Bea Kay is delightful in both these songs. Good fun.

Victor Herbert Melodies; Al Goodman and His Orchestra. Columbia Album C-179, 4:10" discs.

●Goodman plays some of the best loved Herbert melodies with notable grace and sympathy. All are familiar, well-loved songs from the best of the operettas, but done here entirely as orchestral pices. Soothing and gratifying—for relaxation. Well recorded.

Concert In Tivoli; Tivoli Promenade Orchestra conducted by Elo Magnussen. London Album LA-68, 3-10" discs.

●London has lost no time in following its very successful *A Night In Tivoli* (Album LA-34) with an encore set, devoted entirely to the ear-catching and amiable dance melodies of Hans Christian Lumbye (1810-1874). He has been called the Danish Johann Strauss and rightly so, for his works reflect the graceful and romantic spirit of his times. Like those of his famous contemporary, his also drew their inspiration from the events of the day and immediate surroundings. The two waltzes in this album are typical: *Amelie Waltz* and *Kroll's Ballklange*. The remaining numbers — *Hostblomsten Polka* and the *Columbine Mazurka* are two equally charming pices.

The performances are by the present day members of the very same orchestra which Lumbye conducted, and for which he composed. The present conductor, Elo Magnussen, plays these compositions in the right style and spirit. Recording is excellent.

Irish Folk Songs; Michael Tobin, lyric baritone, with Orchestra conducted by William Suter. Capitol Album CC-142, 3-10" discs.

●A little late, perhaps, to commemorate St. Patrick's day but too important to be overlooked. All the songs except *Mother Machree* are authentic folk ones. The singer has a pleasant, if not remarkable voice. More important, he has a genuine feeling for the songs. Some measure of his success with this music may be attributed to his teacher, Edwin Schneider, who was John McCormack's accompanist for 25 years. Most successful are *I Met Her In the Garden Where the Praties Grow* and *A Ballymore Ballad*. Remaining numbers are *Molly Brannigan*, *Kitty of Coleraine*, *Rory O'Moore* and the aforementioned *Mother Machree*. The arrangements by William Suter are so skillfully contrived that one is unaware of any incongruity in the orchestral accompaniments. The recording and surfaces are first rate.

Rosita Serrano Sings South American Rhythms; with Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Spira. London Album LA-65, 3-10" discs.

●Following the sensational success of her previous London album, *Cafe Continental*, in which Serrano demonstrated her linguistic as well as vocal abilities, there has been a demand for more songs by the singer in her native tongue. This fascinating collection meets that demand. Two numbers, *La Paloma* and *Cielito Lindo* are, of course, very familiar but you probably have never heard them sung quite as they are here. Serrano gives them new and subtle meaning. Equally subtle, though not as exuberant, are *Rio Abajo* and *Madrecita*. All are with orchestra. The real gems in the set are *Amo Tu Yancé* and *Corri Llanero*, with guitar only. The rhythms and melodies, of folk-like character, and the performances, are intimate and fascinating. As entertaining as she can be in multi-lingual Continental cabaret songs, Serrano is more at home in songs like the two simple ones just mentioned. Definitely not to be missed. Recording — excellent.

Were Thine That Special Face and *Wunderbar* (both from *Kiss Me, Kate*); Victor 20-3354. *I'll String Along With You* (from *My Dream Is Yours*) and *Bon Soir, Paris* (from *Magdalena*); Victor 20-3371. Henri René and His Orchestra.

●In skillful arrangements like these, Henri René can be compared with Al Goodman, André Kostelanetz, Morton Gould, and company. But he adds a little continental touch of his own in his waltz treatments, as demonstrated in *Bon Soir, Paris* and *Wunderbar*. Villa-Lobos wrote *Bon Soir* and Cole Porter, *Wunderbar*, which undoubtedly explains their better-than-average musical interest. The other two numbers are only a step behind. All four are well presented. Victor's engineering and smooth surfaces add to the pleasure of listening to these records.

Everywhere You Go and *No Orchids For My Lady*; Capitol 15397. *My Dear* and *Soft Shoe Shuffle*; Capitol 15305. Jan Garber and His Orchestra. Vocals by Tim Reardon.

●Neat — in the best Garber manner. Especially his own *My Dear*, which is languidly romantic, and Spencer Williams' *Soft Shoe Shuffle*, which is peppy. More important, both these are all-instrumental—Garber shines. Somehow, vocals spoil the interest in his records — as in the first mentioned disc.

St. Louis Blues and *Beautiful Eyes*; Irving Fields and His Trio. Victor 20-3369.

●The blues is excellently done, with understanding of its fundamental feeling. Played as a piano solo with rhythm accompaniment, it swings. *Beautiful Eyes* is a cheeky song in *Four Leaf Clover* style, mostly vocal. Not as interesting as the other side.

John John and *In A Persian Market*; Herbie Fields and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3052.

●The first might be called a modern counterpart of the classic concert song, *O No John*. The vocal by Pat Flaherty is coy and Fields supplies a good rhythm background, in his best imitation of American swing. Ketelbey's concert piece begins legitimately enough but soon becomes a mildly exciting jam session. It comes out from it not much the worse for wear which speaks well for the durability of Ketelbey's tunes.

Funny Little Money Man and *I'll Wait*; Kay Kyser and His Orchestra. Vocals by Gloria Wood and Harry Babbitt. Columbia 38213.

Funny Little Money Man and *These Will Be the Best Years of Our Lives*; Jo Stafford, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol.

●*Funny* is rather an innocuous song, which only Jo Stafford's vibrant voice saves from complete boredom. Babbitt's treatment is colorless. The Kay Kyser flipover is a cute duet with a lilt. Jo's alternate, is a fervent love song, very well done.

Underneath the Linden Tree and *Streets of Laredo*; Columbia 38409. *Down By the Station* and *Just Reminiscing*; Columbia 38404. Ray Noble and His Orchestra. Vocals by Ken Carson and The Noblemen.

6

●The continental song hit, *Regenpfeifer Sing Dein Leid*, known here as *Underneath the Linden Tree*, is given a neat Noble arrangement, with singing and whistling by Ken Carson. The reverse, from the picture by the same name, is sub-titled "A New Original Song", but on the evidence of one hearing, it turns out to be only an imitation of other "South of the Border" songs. Not even Noble's always interesting orchestration can make it original. Noble doesn't emphasize the "round" characteristics of *Down By the Station*. In fact, he makes a "train song" out of it, with a swell descriptive middle section. *Reminiscing* is a nostalgic bit but hardly worth Noble's talent. He has composed much better pieces in the same vein, himself.

The Rosewood Spinnet and *I Got a Gal in Galveston*; Victor 20-3328. *Love Me! Love Me! Love Me!* and *The Right Girl For Me* (from *Take Me Out To the Ball Game*); Victor 20-3366. Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye. Vocals by The Kaydets, Don Cornell, and Choir.

●Kaye has succeeded very well in capturing the old world flavor in *Rosewood Spinnet*, with a tinkling piano in the background and a soft-spoken chorus to supply the romance. The reverse makes a strange companion, for it is a "swing" Western, hand clapping and all. It could hardly have been done better by a real Western band. *Love Me!* is also a song with a style from the past. The pace and unison choral treatment suggests a soft shoe song and dance team of old vaudeville days. The label on

The Right Girl says "introducing Tony Alamo" who turns out to be a Sinatra imitator. Maybe it couldn't be helped in a song so obviously written in the Sinatra style. Actually, some unison brass passages by the orchestra steal the show.

If You Stub Your Toe On the Moon and *When Is Sometime?* (both from *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court*); Columbia 38417. *While the Angelus Was Ringing* and *Comme Ci Comme Ca*; Columbia 38407. Frank Sinatra, with Orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl.

●Sinatra is stealing a march on Bing by coming out with these recordings before Bing's picture is released (at this writing). As samples, they augur well for the picture. The first is a peppy number, as done here with the Phil Moore Four for support. The other is a swooney-croony number done in Frankie's most insinuating manner. A sure hit for the girls!

With repeated hearings, the continental *Les Trois Cloches*, here called *While the Angelus Was Ringing*, sounds more shallow and phony. Not even Sinatra can make much of it. The reverse, also from Europe, is another matter. With a tune and air about it, it is headed for the top of the heap. Frankie does it in his best melting manner with support from Stordahl, made to order.

I Don't See Me In Your Eyes Anymore and *I Get Up Ev'ry Morning*; Columbia 38408. *I Love You So Much It Hurts* and *Love Me! Love Me! Love Me!* Columbia 38406. Buddy Clark, with Orchestra under the direction of Earl Hagen.

●Buddy improves with acquaintance. The voice and style fit songs like *I Don't See* (a superior number, by the way) and *I Love You* like a glove. Even in the other, jauntier numbers he alters his style effectively. His *Love Me!* doesn't suggest the vaudeville scene, as Sammy Kaye's did. Very well done.

"A" *You're Adorable* and *Need You*; Jo Stafford and Gordon MacRae, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15393.

I Get Up Ev'ry Morning and *The Right Girl For Me* (from *Take Me Out To the Ball Game*); Gordon MacRae and The Starlighters, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15396.

●The Jo Stafford-Gordon MacRae team promises well. The new alphabet song is just cute but the coupling, in the continental manner, reveals some really expert harmonizing. In his solos, Gordon is manly and romantic. The Starlighters help out only in *I Get Up*.

Red Norvo At the Xylophone; Red Norvo, with Orchestra. Capitol Album 33-125, 3-10" discs.

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Record Guide

memories: his days with Mildred Bailey, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman; with his own bands; with other equally talented jazz men in memorable jam sessions never recorded on wax. But enough of that magic remains in this present recording to make this an album that cannot be dismissed lightly. True, there are some things here which are hardly more than exercises at the woodpile. But then there

are things like *El Rojo*, *I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance With You*, and *Take the Red Car* which make up for any lack of inspiration elsewhere. To say it as our French brother-jazz lovers would: "C'est formidable!"

The unnamed orchestra which backs this outstanding jazz artist is made up mostly of woodwinds, whose tone quality blends well with the xylophone.

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